



SOLAR

School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure & Recreation

www.solaroutdoors.org

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John Bryan State Park and Clifton Gorge Nature Preserve or Biking and Hiking in South Central Ohio with a Bunch of Friends

It was Friday, September 12th, when 16 SOLAR friends loaded their gear in their cars, and made a hasty escape from the Detroit Metro area. We were all charting our course for the

parallels the Little Miami River for much of its distance.

At the last minute we decided to skirt Xenia, because of some Old-Timers Day Events being held, there. We were tipped off, by some friendly local riders, that it was so crowded; we wouldn't be able to get our bikes through the town. Hmmm, there must be a lot of old timers in the area! Instead, we took a little known, newer section of trail, which led us, first, to a nice perennial garden, which we toured. It was very interesting, because all the plants were indigenous to the area.

Our ride also took us past an Equestrian Event, Dressage, which is guiding your horse through a series of complex maneuvers, without the benefit of reins, while only using the subtle pressure of your knees and slight movements of your hands and weight. I felt like I was in a bit of a time warp, seeing all the riders in their fancy English riding costumes. Some of us also took time out to watch a series of drag races, featuring funny cars, modified stock cars and top fuel dragsters. Nothing like the smell of burning rubber and gasoline fumes to get the heart of a Detroit boy pumping fast!



Stopping to rest for lunch

Group Campground, at John Bryan State Park, which lay just south and east of Dayton, Ohio. Most of us arrived to a crackling campfire and a beautiful "nearly" full moon. We quickly pitched our tents and gathered around the fire, until we gradually drifted off to our nylon cabins, and a good night's sleep.

Based on our experience, it is true when the park brochure gives the following description: "John Bryan is the most scenic state park in western Ohio. The park contains a remarkable limestone gorge cut by the Little Miami River which is designated as a state and national scenic river. A portion of the gorge itself is designated as a national natural landmark." Besides all the beautiful scenery, over 100 miles of paved bike paths lie within a few mile of the park, and that is one of the reasons most of us are here.

Saturday morning turned out to be beautiful. The sun shone brightly and there was no sign of rain, despite what the weather guessers had been predicting. After breakfast, we divided into 2 groups—those who wanted to go explore the park, on foot, and those who wanted to discover what surprises the bike path had to reveal. Six of us were just departing for the wonders of the park, while the rest of us went to the little town of Yellow Springs, to find the entrance to the bike path.

We decided to ride our bikes south, toward the town of Xenia, the home of a converted train station, which was now a major bike trail hub. Our trip began from an old converted caboose, strategically located on the trail, which had been turned into a bike rental shop. Notice the heavy emphasis on the railroad; after all, this was an old railroad grade—all aboard! The trail



Stopping along the bike route to look at a garden

Ask Grey about his new two-piece bike with his unexpected and unplanned trip down a hill, without the benefit of wheels, or a bike, for that matter! After stopping along the trail, for lunch and ice cream at a local restaurant, we headed back to camp in order to prepare for our traditional Pot Luck Dinner. Yummy, yummy—there was lots of good food and reminiscing about the days events, while sitting around a roaring fire. Some of us ended up riding "personal best" mileage that day!

Clifton Gorge boasts scenic waterfalls and rapids on the headwaters of the Little Miami State and National Scenic River.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The City of Southfield has posted NO PARKING SIGNS on the side street next to Co-ony Hall. They are enforcing this new ordinance by issuing rather costly parking tickets. Please try to park in an orderly fashion in either the paved parking lot or on the lawn. We need to park as many cars in these two areas as possible.



Meanwhile...back at the campsite, the SOLARites preparing for dinner

This 269-acre preserve protects one of the most spectacular dolomite and limestone gorges in the state. Registered as a National Natural

Landmark in 1968, Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve encompasses a two-mile stretch of the Little Miami State and National Scenic River, and on Sunday we all headed into the gorge to understand what this meant, first-hand.

We hiked along the Little Miami River, which through the millennia had gouged its way deep into the rocky soil, forming the cliffs which lined the sides of the river. There were caves, waterfalls, rapids and narrow gorges that the river sculpted out

of the originally flat countryside of Southern Ohio. Our trip, here, is never complete without a stop at Young's Dairy Farm and Restaurant. Before we drove home we stopped and ate lunch, and their great ice cream, under the cows which hung from the roof. Thanks for another great trip Leslie!

- Gene Cordova



Maureen, Richard and Dave at the campsite cooking

All photos for John Bryan trip were given and taken by Mary Bogush

Backpacking trip at Nordhouse Dunes November 7-9

Interested in fun, sun, sand, and water in a Michigan November? Okay, we can't guarantee sun, but we will have lots of the other three. Nordhouse Dunes is a small wilderness area on Lake Michigan just north of Ludington, about 3 1/2 hours from Detroit. The area includes a very long beach with lots of sand and dunes, bordered by wooded areas to create an interesting, fun, and scenic mix.

We will meet at the Lake Michigan Recreational Area campground on Friday. This is a primitive car campground (pit toilets and fresh water, but no showers). If you prefer to crash somewhere else Friday night, meet us at the campground at 9 AM on Saturday. Then we will hike into the wilderness area. The plan is to backcountry camp on Saturday night, then hike back to the campground on Sunday and head home.

This is an easy backpacking trip. Given the weather this time of year (it can get cold at night!), participants should have had the basic backpacking class.

The only cost for this trip is a parking permit for each car, which is \$6 for two nights. You can get your permit on the way to the campground.

Directions to the campground: Take I-96 from the Detroit area to Muskegon, then head north on US-31. Continue following US-31 after the freeway ends in Ludington; turn right at the end of the freeway, then go about 5 miles until US-31 turns left, follow it. Continue another 11 miles, then turn left at Forest Trail 5629 (there's a BP station on the corner; you can buy your car permit there). It's another 8 miles to the campground.

Please email me at kdcotter@comcast.net or call me at (248) 544-9637 if you plan to come. You can also sign up at the November 4 Solar meeting. Hope to see you there!

- Kevin Cotter

SOLAR Bandaging and Splinting Workshop

When? Saturday, Nov 22nd, 9AM to 5PM.

Where? Somewhere in town.

How much? Very inexpensive...around \$10 or less.

Who can play? Anyone with a current first aid certification.

Please, please... could you tell me more?

We'll do a quick review on scene safety, primary survey, and secondary survey; then we'll practice tying each other up and have fun at the same time. This is a non-certification workshop and an informal way to keep our skills current. Great!!

When can I sign up? You can sign up at the November meeting, or contact Lester at:

519-256-0524, whitetai.48105yyy@yahoo.com





CAVING AND/OR HIKING IN KENTUCKY

ALL LEVELS, NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!!!!

KID FRIENDLY, NO PETS

JANUARY 23 - 25, 2004

IS THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN - TIME FOR THE 20th ANNUAL CARTER CAVES CRAWL-A-THON. WHAT IS A CRAWL-A-THON YOU MIGHT ASK--THIS IS AN ANNUAL EVENT PUT ON BY CARTER CAVES STATE PARK IN OLIVE HILL, KENTUCKY. IT IS A GREAT WAY FOR PEOPLE TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH CAVING AS THEY OFFER A WIDE VARIETY OF CAVE TOURS, RANGING FROM WALKING TOURS, A LITTLE BIT OF CRAWLING, A LOT OF CRAWLING AND VERTICAL CAVING. THEY EVEN HAVE TRIPS FOR KIDS AND SENIORS!! IF YOU DO NOT LIKE THE UNDERGROUND, DON'T Worry, AS THERE IS SOME GREAT HIKING IN THE AREA.

THE BASIC PLAN IS TO DRIVE DOWN TO THE PARK ON FRIDAY (ABOUT A 3-HOUR DRIVE) AND STAY RIGHT AT THE CARTER CAVES LODGE. THEY HAVE A LIMITED NUMBER OF ROOMS AVAILABLE, ONCE THEY ARE FILLED, THE NEAREST LODGING IS 10-15 MILES AWAY. THE COST FOR 2 NIGHTS LODGING IS \$45 PER ADULT AND \$25 PER CHILD 16 AND UNDER, PAYABLE TO SOLAR. SINCE THIS TRIP WILL FILL UP, ONLY PAYMENTS IN FULL WILL BE ACCEPTED TO HOLD YOUR SPOT.

YOU WILL NEED TO DOWNLOAD THE CRAWL-A-THON ENTRY AND RELEASE FORMS YOURSELF FROM WWW.CRAWLATHON.COM OR CALL THE PARK AT (606) 286-6411. GENERALLY THE FORMS ARE NOT AVAILABLE UNTIL MID DECEMBER. YOU WILL NEED TO SEND IN BOTH FORMS YOURSELF ALONG WITH A CHECK FOR \$50 TO CARTER CAVES. YOUR \$50 INCLUDES 2 DAYS OF GUIDED CAVING AND A T-SHIRT FROM THE EVENT. PLEASE DO NOT DELAY AS THE TRIPS FILL UP QUICKLY.

SEE ME AT THE MEETING FOR A LISTING OF EQUIPMENT YOU MAY NEED. SOLAR HAS HEADLAMPS, KNEE AND ELBOW PADS (CLEANED) AND HEADLAMPS (LIMITED). IF YOU MAY BORROW, A REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT IS REQUIRED. I DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH EQUIPMENT FOR EVERYONE, SO YOU WILL NEED TO RESERVE IN ADVANCE. TO BE FAIR, THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN ON SOLAR CAVING TRIPS PREVIOUSLY WILL GET FIRST DIBS ON PADS AND HEADLAMPS.

NEED MORE INFO CONTACT LESLIE CORDOVA AT (248) 547-5626 OR LESLIEGENE@AOL.COM.

Moonlight Canoeing

A large group of Solarites took advantage of Indian Summer by heading out to Proud Lake on Friday, October 10 for an evening of moonlight canoeing. The event was organized by Heavner Canoe Rental and included pizza dinner, ice cream, s'mores, and a guided trip along the Huron River. The group headed west just before sunset to watch the soft colors along the horizon as day became evening. Once we arrived in Milford, the group turned around and headed east into the moonrise. First it was a huge yellow/orange pecking through the trees and later became a bright white globe high in the sky. Proud Lake is quite different at night, swans are silhouettes tucked along the shore and willow trees are huge webs that can pop out from nowhere. After about 2 hours on the water, we returned to the rental for a bonfire on the hill. S'mores were the main course of the group, as well as the traditional sing along and story telling. It was truly a unique experience even for the well seasoned paddler.

For those of you who missed it, Alan Heavner would like to plan more events like this. To be put on a mailing list, or better yet, an e-mail list, contact Rose at Heavner Canoe Rental at Proud Lake Canoe Rental 248-685-2379.

CELEBRATE WINTER

Winter can be a time when many voice their discontent with the weather. These poor souls just haven't had the opportunity to have fun outdoors during our coldest season! Come join in the celebration January 16-18. SOLAR members will be staying at Boyne Valley Lodge Friday and Saturday night. The lodge is located west of US 131 just 7 miles north of Boyne Mountain. Down hill, cross country skiing and tubing are available at nearby resorts. Lodge rooms have three sets of bunk beds and a private bath. There is a large lounge with a fireplace, a game room and a heated swimming pool open Saturday evening. Breakfast is included Saturday and Sunday with dinner Saturday evening. This is a "kid friendly" trip. So, bring the kids, the skis, bathing suit and beach towel. The cost is \$80 with a deposit of \$40 due by November 6. All linens are provided except for use at the pool. Ski passes and trail fees are extra. Contact Mary Dunn for more information. 248-585-9954.

If you are considering taking the Winter Backpacking/Enjoying Michigan Winters Class

(see class details on page 6), but are not sure it's for you, perhaps you'd be interested in reading about the experiences of three different students who have taken this class over the last three years. If so, please feel free to send an e-mail to Joan Tobin at BelleJT@aol.com or call (734) 281-1568 or pick up a copy at the November SOLAR meeting.

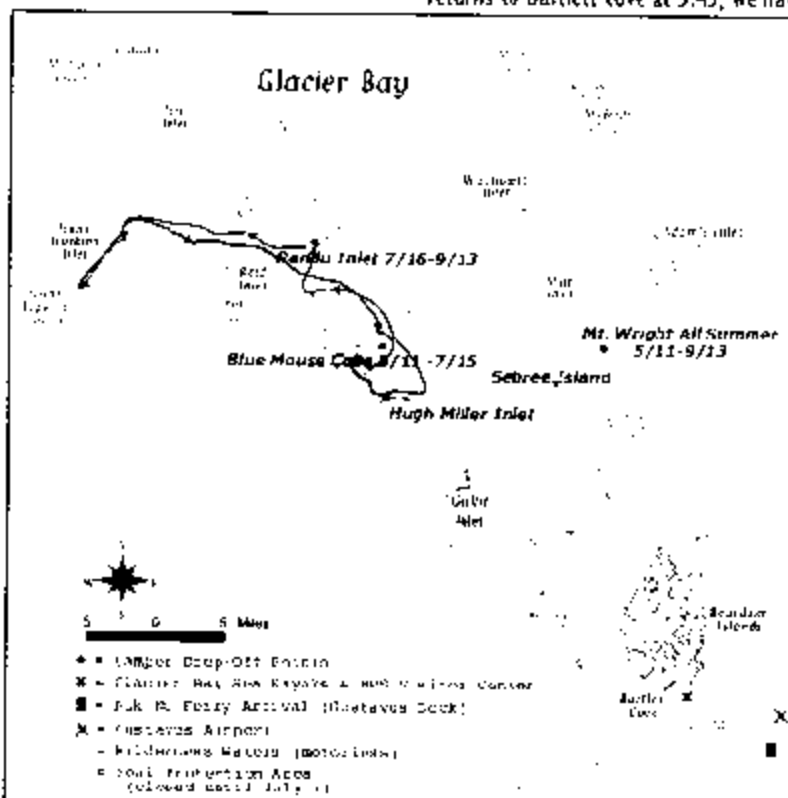
Report on Solar Trip to Glacier Bay National Park - August 21-31, 2003

continued from October Ray

Monday, Aug 25: We take our time at the campsite. Two porpoises and some seals visit us. We break camp and launch about 1 pm and head down the bay, past Reid Glacier. Two orcas pass about 50 feet on our left and leap out of the water. Fantastic!!! We passed a beach but continue, only to find miles of cliffs again. The scenery changes dramatically: from the stark barren scenery at Johns Hopkins Inlet to a lush green forest of Sitka spruce, cottonwood, and alder. Finally find a rocky beach about 7:15 near Blue Mouse Cove (point 3). Set up camp and cook at dark. Clear skies, lots of stars, no northern lights tonight. Distance paddled: 14 miles.

Tuesday, Aug 26: Skies turn overcast in the morning and it looks like rain is on its way. Matt heard whales sleeping during the night, so we set out looking for them. We break camp and leave about 11 am, and head into Blue Mouse Cove, looking for wildlife. See lots of rafts of ducks. Landscape is lush. We paddle around the far side of the island past Blue Mouse cove, then back to the campsite we had passed yesterday (point 4). We get to the campsite about 7:30, and it starts drizzling. We get the tents set up quickly, have dinner in the grey mist. After dinner, I head down to the water to rinse dishes, only to slip on a rock and fall. My left wrist hits some sharp barnacles and I'm cut all over. Not fun. I go to bed and Matt finishes cleaning up. The rain gets heavier during the night. Distance paddled: 14 miles.

Wednesday, Aug 27: I wake up to find our water almost gone, there is no fresh water source in sight, so we can't make breakfast or coffee. Not a good start. Our pick up point is 3.9 miles across the bay, open water, and we've left some water there. I'm anxious to get going. By the time we get going (about 1 pm), the winds have picked up and there's 3 foot whitecaps on the water, so we turn back and paddle down the shore in search of water. After paddling about 1.5 miles, we finally stop and get out. Still see whitecaps, can't cross. I get out of my boat, thirsty and irritated, and start walking down the shore to let off steam. About 100 feet away I heard rushing water, and there, lo and behold, is a freshwater stream! I get my Pur filter and every Nalgene in sight and start pumping. I manage to drink 2 liters of water in about 10 minutes. Now we have plenty of water and 2 days worth of food, so crossing is not a critical matter. We wait 4 hours, finally about 6:30 the winds die down and the waves diminish to a 0.5-1 foot chop, so we set out on our 3.5 mile crossing. Wave and wind conditions are well within our skill levels, but this is still a major undertaking. No margin for error now. It takes about 1 hour 20 minutes to cross... probably the longest 1 hour and 20 minutes in my life. Just about kissed the ground when we landed. We set up camp and cook in the dark, but now we know we'll be picked up tomorrow morning. Distance paddled: a *very* long 5 miles.



Thursday, Aug 28: We break camp and wait for the tour boat to pick us up. I spot an orca swimming around in front of us. Another paddler arrives. Stu was dropped off with us, he was by himself, wearing swim trunks and a t-shirt. He told us about his encounter with a grizzly, then I realized we never saw any bears. Lucky us... or lucky him? The tour boat arrives about 10:30, we quickly load our gear and boats, then we board. As we step inside, there's a crowd of people on the day cruise taking our picture... gee, we're 31A's. The tour boat follows the same route we took, giving us one last look at each campsite (we camped THERE??). Johns Hopkins glacier is less spectacular, but at least now I'm not contending with a sore butt. People seem fascinated about the details of our trip: "how long were you gone? Did you have tents? What did you eat? Did you see bears/whales/birds/whatever? The tour boat returns to Bartlett Cove at 3:45, we have to rush to unload and return the

boats, check out at the park office, and grab a cab to the Gustavus airport for our 5:30 flight. We fly back to Juneau on a little Cessna with 4 passengers and one pilot. I'm in the front seat with the pilot. Wonderful view for the 20 minute plane ride. We finally decide to return to the motel where we spent last Thursday night, giving our gear a chance to dry out. Most important detail: we flip a coin to see who gets the shower first. I won.

Friday, Aug 29: Matt goes fishing with Bill, his friend in Juneau while I go to Mendenhall Glacier. When I get back to the room that afternoon, the room STINKS. It's our clothes we left laying out to dry. Matt catches a halibut, we go to dinner with Bill and his wife.

Saturday, Aug 30: It's now pouring rain. Spend the day shopping, gawking at the cruise ships in dock, and having that halibut for dinner.

Sunday, Aug 31: Fly home. Nothing else to say. I hated to leave.

- Kevin Cotter

SKIING ON THE TRAILS OF THE OLYMPIANS

Join me for a ski adventure in Norway! Have you dreamed of skiing on the Olympic cross country ski trails at Lillehammer? This is a rare chance to do just that! The trip departs from Chicago on February 10 and returns on the 18th. Hotel lodging, ground transportation in Norway and almost all meals are included for \$1500. The group will be staying in Sjusjoen where there are 100 miles of groomed trails outside the hotel door. A day's skiing might take us to a nearby town where public transportation returns us to the hotel for a relaxing sauna. This trip is being run by a very skilled skier with international ski experience. Meet him at Saulte Ste Marie between December 28 and January 1. Contact Mary Dunn for more information. 248-585-9954.

SOLAR NOVEMBER 2003 CALENDAR

School For Outdoor Leadership, Adventure & Recreation

N	NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES					
O	4	TUES	GENERAL MEETING	COLONY HALL	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
V			Program: Dog Sledding		Lou Szakal	everest2006@aol.com
	7-9	WKND	DOUBLE JJ RANCH HALLOWEEN**	Rothbury, WI	Bill Cowdin, Lisa Boose	cowdin@accentremodeing.com
	7-9	WKND	BACKPACKING	Nordhouse Dunes	Kevin Cotter	kdcotter@comcast.net
	22	SAT	BANDAGING & SPLINTING WKSH-P	TBD	Lester Mok	writetail46105yyy@yahoo.com
D	DECEMBER ACTIVITIES					
E	2	TUES	GENERAL MEETING	COLONY HALL	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
C			Program: Annual SOLAR Holiday Party		Lou Szakal	everest2006@aol.com
	14	SAT	CHRISTMAS CAROLING AT NURSING HOME		Maragret Martin	mimpluscat1@cs.com
	DECEMBER CLASSES					
	4, 11	THUR	WINTER BACKPACKING CLASS	TBD	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
J	JANUARY ACTIVITIES					
A	6	TUES	GENERAL MEETING	COLONY HALL	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
N			Program: Annual SOLAR Photo Contest		Lou Szakal	everest2006@aol.com
	23-25	WKND	CRAWLATHON	CARTER CAVES, KY	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
	JANUARY CLASSES					
	8, 15, 22, 29	THUR	WINTER BACKPACKING CLASS	TBD	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
	7, 14, 21, 28	WED	BASIC MOUNTAINEERING CLASS	Galyans, Novi	Lou Szakal	everest2006@aol.com
	10	SAT	WINTER SAFETY CLASS	TBD	Joan Tobin	belley@aol.com
	23-24	WKND	WINTER BACKPACKING PRACTICAL 1	Waterloo State Park	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
F	FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES					
E	3	TUES	GENERAL MEETING	COLONY HALL	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
B			Program: TBD		Lou Szakal	everest2006@aol.com
	20-22	WKND	DCG SLEDDING	South River, Ontario	Karen Bates	lady_musher@yahoo.com
	20-22	WKND	X-C SKIING, SNOW SHOEING, ETC	Hartwick Pines, Grayling	Maria Edwards	maria.edwards@eds.com
	FEBRUARY CLASSES					
	1	SUN	CROSS COUNTRY SKIING CLASS	Roscommon	Gene Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
	8-Jun	WKND	WINTER BACKPACKING PRACTICAL 2	Pigeon River	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
	4, 18	WED	BASIC MOUNTAINEERING CLASS	Galyans, Novi	Lou Szakal	everest2006@aol.com
	7	SAT	BASIC MOUNTAINEERING PRACTICAL 1	TBD	Lou Szakal	everest2006@aol.com
	27-29	WKND	BASIC MOUNTAINEERING PRACTICAL 2	TBD	Lou Szakal	everest2006@aol.com
	FUTURE ACTIVITIES					
	April 2-4	WKND	WHITE WATER RAFTING	New River, WV	Laura Albin	albinlau@msu.com
W	WEEKLY EVENTS					
E	MONDAYS		WALLEY BALL**	Westland	Chip Kleinbrook	michip1234@aol.com
E	THURSDAYS		ROCK CLIMBING**	Planet Rock Pontiac	Michelle Delaporte	lazspaz2@hotmail.com
K	SAT OR SUN		HIKING**	Locations Vary	Neggie Hayes	566-778-3589
L	FOR INFORMATION ON JOINING THE SOLAR CLUB, CONTACT MARY PRICE (248) 477-7547 or VISIT WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG					
Y	IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP PLAN AND/OR LEAD A SOLAR ACTIVITY, CONTACT					
	CAM RICH SZAKAL AT (248) 885-0367 OR SOLARACTIVITIES@NETSCAPE.NET					
	SOLAR HAS A NO-REFUND POLICY. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND AN ACTIVITY YOU MAY					
	'SELL YOUR SPOT' TO ANOTHER CLUB MEMBER.					
	**Denotes Non-Solar Activity (Solar will not be held responsible for these activities).					

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE -- WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG

BASIC MOUNTAINEERING CLASS

*Have you ever wondered what it would be like to stand on the Summit of a Mountain?
Or to even know what it takes to get there?
Here is your chance to find out.*

Starting in January through February 2004, I will be teaching the Basic Mountaineering and Safety Skills Class to 12 lucky students who are interested in devoting their time and energy to the sport of Mountaineering.

COST \$100.00

HERE'S WHAT YOU GET:

BASIC MOUNTAINEERING SKILLS

ICE AXE USE
HEALTH/FITNESS ISSUES
NAVIGATION
SELF ARREST
LEADERSHIP
WEBSITES
PRUSSIK ROPES
AVALANCHE ISSUES
ROPED TRAVEL

MOUNTAIN SAFETY
TECHNICAL TOOL USAGE
FIRST AID ISSUES
KNOTS
WEATHER
GLACIER CROSSING
OPTIONAL MOUNTAIN TRIP
MOUNTAINEERING BOOKS
CRAMPON USE
CLIMBING ISSUES

GEAR ISSUES
CLOTHING
CREVASSE RESCUE
ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
READING MATERIAL
EXPEDITION PLANNING
2 WEEKEND PRACTICAL
WEBBING
ALPINE RESCUE
SLED SKILLS

TOP NOTCH INSTRUCTION FROM TOP NOTCH INSTRUCTORS

PREREQUISITES

MANDATORY

*BASIC BACKPACKING
*LAND NAVIGATION
*WINTER CAMPING
*RED CROSS FIRST AID
*CPR CERTIFICATION

RECOMMENDED

**WILDERNESS FIRST AID
**ROCK CLIMBING
**INTERMEDIATE BACKPACKING
**ADVANCED BACKPACKING
**SEARCH AND RESCUE
**WINTER SURVIVAL

Lou Szakal
248-685-0367 or Lverest2006@aol.com

From the SOLAR Program Director

By Lou Szakal

Upcoming SOLAR Program Schedule

Please note: all programs will take place at Colony Hall
immediately following the SOLAR Business meeting

NOVEMBER PROGRAM

*DOG SLEDDING by: Karen Bates
Lady_musher@yahoo.com*

Karen has been leading dog sledding trips for the past several years. This has become one of the more popular trips that SOLAR has to offer. This season, Karen has put together two trips for the weekend of February 20-22, and will be making a presentation on dog sledding and her past trips. She will also start taking sign ups during the November meeting.

DECEMBER PROGRAM

Annual Holiday Party

SOLAR will provide Subs, soft drinks and a DJ. Fellow SOLARites are asked to bring a dish (salad, desserts etc.).

JANUARY PROGRAM

Annual Picture Contest

Get your pictures ready for this yearly event. Complete rules will be published in the December Ray.

ANYONE INTERESTED IN DOG SLEDDING?

Start Planning your winter getaways. For those who are looking forward to this season's dog sled trip it is time to plan for it and sign up!

For those who think this idea is crazy enough to try, join us on this fantastic adventure. The dog sled trip will be taking place in South River, Ontario the weekend of February 20-22, 2004.

Sign-ups will start at the Solar Club Meeting starting in November. Last chance to sign up will be at the February meeting in the year of 2004. (Or, when all spots are sold)

THINK
"SNOW DOGS"



For more information seek Karen Bates at the SOLAR Club meetings or E-mail at: lady_musher@yahoo.com

Karen

The SOLAR Club

would like to give a special

Thank You

to these people:

Ron Quinn

for his recent donation of a backpack and tent to the club.

and

Richard Duke

for his recent donation of a tent and sleeping bag.

Thanks Ron and Richard, I am sure we will put this equipment to good use.

SOLAR Cross Country Ski Class

SOLAR will be putting on its Cross Country Ski Class, on Sunday, February 1, 2004. Are you tired of being cooped up in the house from December through March? Would you like to get out and see the beautiful, snow-covered landscape, and learn to enjoy the Michigan winter? Have you always wanted to try cross-country skiing, but just haven't had the opportunity to learn? Were you afraid, because you were not sure how safe, or good, the trails and the instruction were going to be? Maybe you are already a "shuffler" and just want to improve your technique.

If any of these scenarios describe your situation, come out and join us at one of the premiere cross-country skiing venues in the Lower Peninsula—Cross Country Ski Headquarters, in Roscommon, MI. Gene Cordova, along with our Cross Country Ski Headquarters hosts, Bob and Lynne Frye, welcome all to come out and have a great day on the beautifully groomed trails. Although any skill level could probably benefit from these lessons, we are targeting those in the "beginner" to "intermediate" categories.

Jim Bradley, a well known X-C Ski instructor from Mount Pleasant, along with Leslie Cordova and Karen Bates, will be giving the personalized instruction, depending on class size. After you master your new skills, we will be going out on the trails to convert all of our new found knowledge into FUN! So, if you still cannot get enough instruction, Gene will provide "on-trail" coaching and answer any questions you may have. X-C Ski Headquarters offers several loop trails that are tailored to the beginning and intermediate skier. I hope some of you more advanced skiers will meet us out on the trails. SEE YOU THERE! THINK SNOW! Hot beverages will be provided!



Trip Limits: 6 students minimum and 20 student maximum (3 instructors)

Costs: 4 hour lesson, with skiing afterwards (for 6 to 20 students, the cost is \$17.00 per student)

Equipment Rental—

There is a \$10.00 rental fee for skis, boots and poles (4 hours), which includes a trail pass. There is a full-day rental which is \$14.00, and includes everything in the 4-hour rental. If you provide your own skis, boots and poles the trail pass is \$5.00. (Skis, boots or poles can be rented, individually, if you only need one or 2 of the items)

- Leslie & Gene Cordova (lesliegene@aol.com)

Letters from the road

California and other adventures

I managed to get through Southern California alive and swore that I would never return. That place is not fit for man, beast nor biker. I headed for the relative sanity of Death Valley. Logically riding a bike through Death Valley in July is in and of itself insane. I descended into the depths of the valley in the heat of the day. Arriving at the hamlet of Stovepipe I was in need of gasoline. Unfortunately Stovepipe was without power, no power, no fuel. I had just driven across 75 miles of rather unpleasant California desert and couldn't make the return trip without refueling. The proprietor of the gas station told me that he thought that Furnace Creek, the park headquarters had power. The trouble was that Furnace Creek was an additional 25 miles into the valley. If the power was out there my troubles would multiply. The thought of being stranded in this 120 degree heat was not comforting. Never one to shuck from an adventure I headed toward Furnace Creek, running on my reserve supply of gasoline. Fortunately the park headquarters had power and therefore precious fuel. I rested, refuel and refreshed in the shade of the ranger station,

where the temperature was only 112 degrees.

On the return ride there was a group of police, ranger cars and several ambulances parked on the side of the road just outside of Stovepipe. Overhead was a small airplane circling low. Being the nosey type I stopped and asked what was going on. A family from Czechovolska was vacationing in the southwest. The family of four headed off into the desert for a hike. The father collapsed from the heat, the mother

and grown children left him there and sought help. They left a trail of clothes behind. By the time they got to the road all three were naked. They were in the ambulance while the rangers went off into the desert to rescue their father and husband. I was standing next to a state trooper when he got the radio call that they had found the body of the lost hiker at the end of the clothes trail. I didn't want to see any more of this tragedy and headed out of the valley.

It was too hot to camp out that night so I found a cheap motel to cool off. In

a scene reminiscent from the movie Mr. Mom, I cooled my overheated rear end by straddling my naked butt on the air conditioner unit. Not a pretty visual!!!!!!

The ride continued for several more weeks without any major incidents. I was able to catch the car ferry across Lake Michigan, which saved me several days riding. Avoiding going through or around Chicago is always a good thing.

I was back on Michigan soil at last. The ferry arrived in Ludington at 6pm. I was bound and determined to sleep in my own bed after 49 days on the road. I was running across highway 10 east of Ludington. It was dusk I should have slowed down but I didn't. I didn't see the deer run across the road until the very last second. I hit the doe broadside at 65 miles an hour. My bike went right over top of the deer; all I heard was two quick thumps. The bike went into a severe wobble and for a few seconds I thought that I was going down. I managed to keep the bike upright and kept on moving. After 37 years of motorcycling I had my first and hopefully last bike deer encounter of the worst kind. I lived to tell about it the deer wasn't so fortunate. Venison was the main course at the road kill café that night.

- Tom Dunn

Winter Backpacking/Enjoying Michigan Winters

Winter backpacking skill is not just for the winter, it is a useful back-up for the unexpected cold days in early spring and late fall. In this class we'll teach you:

- How to keep fingers and toes warm & energy levels high while skiing or snow shoeing in the winter
- Build a snow shelter just in case something does go HORRIBLY WRONG on that simple 3 hr. ski trip
- The "ins and outs" of winter camping in Michigan
- You can also use these skills in the summer on glaciers and snowy peaks in the Rockies, Cascades, Alaska, or Kilimanjaro.

The classes will be held December 4 & 11, January 8, 15, 22 and 29 and practicals will be held January 23-24 & February 6-8. The cost is \$100.00 for new students and reduced fee for past graduates. Pick up details at the monthly meeting. This course is open to the graduates of the Backpacking Course (graduates of non-SOLAR backpacking courses may be admitted by special permission only). This course is the prerequisite for the Winter Survival Course. For safety reasons, the Wilderness First Aid Course is highly recommended. With the recent warm winters keep your fingers crossed & pray for snow. To sign up or if you have any questions contact: **TOM OLOFFO (313) 288-0057 mcmountainman@yahoo.com**

OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS' WOMEN IN THE WILDERNESS WEEKEND

by
Gene Cordova

Derenda Howard, of Oak and County Parks, recently organized the Women in the Wilderness Weekend, at Addison Oaks County Park. Women from all over the Oakland County area gathered at the park to participate. They came from all walks of life and age groups, although most were still celebrating various anniversaries of their 29th birthdays!

In all, 35 adventurous women decided to pit themselves against the most powerful, and fearsome, lady in the outdoors. Mother Nature! These mostly novice, aspiring outdoorswomen were willing to test their determination, resolve and courage against the unpredictability of the wild. Clearly, the odds would be against them without some assistance.

Fear not! Addison Oaks County Park, just north of Rochester, was a beautiful setting for this "comprehensive introduction to the outdoors". With its picturesque lake, heavily wooded landscape and easily accessible, undulating trails system, it was the perfect venue for the kinds of adventure Derenda had in mind, for us!

This weekend was meant to challenge as well as to inform, and some of the ladies experienced their first challenge, on Friday night, when they were greeted with a bit of Michigan rain. Luckily, Saturday morning dawned dry, if not warm, and the Wilderness Women gathered to eat breakfast around a smoky campfire. These caring ladies had signed up for such classes as:



Backpacking

(SOLAR member Rozelle Moulton instructing)

Orienteering

(SOLAR member Lester Mok instructing; members Lynn Dubay & Joan Tobin assisting)

Wilderness Rescue

(SOLAR member Margaret Martin instructing)

Survival

(SOLAR member Laura Albin instructing; members Tom Cloffo/Gene Cordova/Larry Mergentime assisting)

Canoeing

(Oakland County Parks Counselors)

Edible Plants

(Sierra Club)

Mountain Biking

(Wolverines Mountain Biking Club)

After breakfast, the intrepid ladies were all in great spirits and quickly broke into their small groups to participate in their chosen seminars, over the next couple days. You will notice that SOLAR was well represented among the instructors. All the instructors received a lot of compliments for making the subject matter interesting and fun. The students were a great group—always smiling, laughing and joking around, during breaks, yet attentive, appreciative, respectful and very willing to learn, while in their group sessions.

It was a fun 2 days spent with some great people. If you talk to any of the instructors, I am sure they will say it was a very gratifying experience for them, and 2 days well spent. Nice job Derenda and nice job SOLAR CLUB instructors! If you ever have the opportunity of helping with an Oakland County Parks event, please get involved. You'll be glad you did, and the Parks will appreciate the much-needed help!

By the way, there was a reporter and photographer at the event. Please read what they had to say about it at:

<http://www.dctnews.com/2003/health/0310/01/h08-285586.htm>

SOLAR RAY ARTICLE DEADLINE DATES

Please send all articles and photos not later
than the dates given below for consideration:

DECEMBER 2003 ISSUE - NOV. 14TH

JANUARY 2004 ISSUE - DEC. 12TH

to

Stacie Kitchen
239 E. 12 Mile Rd., Apt 17
Royal Oak, MI 48073

Email: skitchen@wowway.com
albinlau@msu.edu/586-524-3077

Winter Outdoor Safety Class

This one day class will prepare novice cross-country skiers and winter hikers for their day trips. Topics include winter hazards, heat management, clothing, hydration, nutrition, hypothermia and frostbite, trip planning and basic trail navigation.

This class will be held on

Saturday, January 10, 2004 from 9 AM to 6 PM.

The fee is \$15.

There is no prerequisite for this course. The registration deadline is the January general meeting. More information about the course location and materials will be provided upon sign-up.

For additional information, please contact:

Lynn Dubay: ldubay@esc.com
Michelle Ganske: boundarymoon@famvid.com
Joan Tobin: BelleJT@aol.com

SOLAR is a non-profit club with 400-plus members dedicated to the intelligent enjoyment of nature and outdoor pursuits.

Membership is only \$40 a year per person (\$55 per family) and includes discounts to a number of retail outfitters, access to club-owned equipment, a monthly newsletter, and a chance to meet hundreds of other like-minded adventurers drawn together by a common love of pristine lakes, breathtaking vistas, virgin forests and scenic shorelines, and the experiences to be found there.

SOLAR MEETINGS

Are held the first Tuesday of every month in Southfield at the Colony Hall, 21780

Evergreen (between 8 & 9 Mile Roads) at 7:30 p.m.

Visitors can come for FREE!



SOLAR Steering Committee

President Tom Oloffe
Vice President Tom Hayes
Secretary Cindy Taylor
Treasurer Reggie Hayes
Activities Pam Riehl
By-Laws Gloria Fontaine
Education Harry Price

Equipment Historian Carol McChrie
Membership Programs Charles Hailey
Pub. Relations Mary Price
Solar Ray Lou Szakal
Web Master Jenny Couch
 Stacie Kitchen
 Karl Overhaul

At Large: Mike Baaks • Moe DeFrance • Al Fylak • Steve Gardner
 Bill Halvingis • Cindy Harrison-Felix • Doug Lanyk • Larry Martin
 Joan Hettinger • Leslie Cordova • Jean & Bob Westbrook

SOLAR Steering Committee Meetings - The Steering Committee meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. These meetings are usually open to the general membership. Anyone who is interested in learning what topics are being discussed, the decisions being made, or contemplating running for a position on the Steering Committee is welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending the Steering Committee Meeting, contact Tom Oloffe at (313) 386-0057 or mcmountainman@yahoo.com

SOLAR RAY is a monthly publication of SOLAR and is sent free to current dues-paid members. If you change your address please tell the membership chairman, Mary Price, hmpriec@ameritech.net.

Submission Guidelines:

SOLAR events have priority over non-club events; events in the next 2 months have priority over other events. Please submit all articles and photos to:

Stacie Kitchen, 239 E. 12 Mile Rd. Apt 17 Royal Oak MI 48073
 or call (586) 212-2335 (leave message w/your ph #)
 emailing me???? USE skitchen@wowway.com

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.SOLARBOUTDOOR.ORG

GENE & LESLIE CORDOVA
 14520 BORMAN
 OAK PARK, MI 48237



Southfield, MI 48037
 P.O. Box 2438

S.O.L.A.R.